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Pesticides & Toxic Substances Law News for June 18, 2018

**Bloomberg
Environment**

Environment & Energy

Highlights

LEADING THE NEWS

[Trump Pick for Environment Council Faces Easier Confirmation Path](#)

By Abby Smith

Democratic senators and environmentalists agree that President Donald Trump's new pick to chair the White House environment shop is a step in a better—or at least more tolerable—direction.

[EPA's Pruitt Got Rose Bowl Tickets. Democrats Want to Know How \(1\)](#)

By Terrence Dopp (Bloomberg) and Jennifer A. Dlouhy (Bloomberg)

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt obtained tickets to the Rose Bowl with the help of a firm that does public affairs and communications work for energy companies—and a top congressional Democrat wants to know the details.

[Trump Happy With Pruitt's Performance. But Not His Scandals \(1\)](#)

By Jennifer A. Dlouhy

President Donald Trump says Scott Pruitt's done "a fantastic job" but that he's "not happy" about some of the EPA administrator's actions, amid numerous ethics probes that have cast doubt on Pruitt's continued tenure at the agency.

TODAY'S NEWS

[New York Chemical Disclosure Rule Vexes Companies, May Fail Public](#)

By Pat Rizzuto

New York state's regulation requiring cleaning product manufacturers to publicly disclose the chemicals in their products could fail to achieve its goals, said a senior director at Seventh Generation Inc.

[Sweden Seeking EU-wide Ban on Chemical Paraffins](#)

By Marcus Hoy

A chemical commonly used in electrical cable insulation as a plasticizer and flame retardant would be banned across the European Union if regulators agree to a proposal by Sweden.

THURSDAY NIGHT WRAPUP

[Farmworkers Get Updated Pesticide Training With New EPA Guidance](#)

By Ayanna Alexander

Farmworkers will get updated training on handling pesticides after the EPA June 14 released long-sought updates to the requirements.

[EPA Adopting New Policies for Lead Paint After Whistleblower Case](#)

By Adam Allington

The Environmental Protection Agency released new guidelines designed to help prevent exposing children and pregnant women to lead dust during repairs or renovations of older housing.



Redefining EPA

Overhauling an agency and its mission

<https://insideepa.com/agency-at-a-crossroads>

TSCA Tracker

<http://insideepa.com/specials/tsca-tracker>

Latest News

No new stories today.

Daily Feed

Eying TSCA backlog, EPA seeks expedited ICR review

EPA is seeking expedited White House review of an information request as part of its ongoing effort to speed new chemical reviews under the revised TSCA.

Study tallies adverse impacts of rollbacks, sparking EPA criticism

Two Harvard professors estimate Trump EPA rollbacks will result in 80,000 deaths over ten years but EPA and one of its top science advisors are pushing back.

Ewire: Inhofe floats Pruitt departure from EPA

In today's Ewire: The Oklahoma senator and longtime political patron of Scott Pruitt says he isn't directly calling on Pruitt to resign as EPA chief, but wants a meeting by Monday to address his various ethics and spending scandals.

Greenwire



AN E&E NEWS PUBLICATION

EPA

PR exec helped Pruitt get Rose Bowl tickets

[Kevin Bogardus](#), E&E News reporter Published: Friday, June 15, 2018



The Rose Bowl stadium in Pasadena, Calif. Bobak Ha'Eri/Wikipedia

An Oklahoma public relations executive helped EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt score coveted tickets to this year's Rose Bowl.

Rep. Elijah Cummings (D-Md.), ranking member on the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, sent a [letter](#) yesterday to Renzi Stone, chairman and CEO of Saxum.

The lawmaker cited the committee staff's interview last month in which Pruitt's former scheduling director at EPA, Millan Hupp, identified Stone as a go-between for the administrator, adding that Pruitt had paid for the tickets but she didn't know how much they cost. The Oklahoma Sooners played in the Rose Bowl this year, and Stone sits on the University of Oklahoma Board of Regents.

"Federal ethics rules prohibit government employees from accepting gifts, such as tickets to sporting events, unless they pay 'market value,'" Cummings warned in his letter. "Moreover, a government employee may not accept a gift provided 'because of the employee's official position.'"

Stone told E&E News that he referred Pruitt elsewhere to find tickets to the game.

"He was directed to the university where he paid face value. I connected him to the right person to buy the tickets," said Stone, adding Pruitt has been his friend since 2001.



Renzi Stone. Saxum Strategic Communications LLC

On its [website](#), Stone's firm lists several clients in the energy sector — such as the American Petroleum Institute, the Interstate Natural Gas Association of America and oil and gas pipeline company Williams Cos. Inc. — that could be affected by EPA's regulations and enforcement of environmental laws.

Stone, however, said he has had "zero" contact with Pruitt or EPA during this or last year on behalf of any of his firm's clients.

"That's not the kind of work we do. I occasionally talk to the administrator about OU football, and he was recently helpful with a university health science center on a federal Medicaid funding issue," Stone said.

EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox said, "It seems Representative Cummings is misconstruing the facts.

"Renzi Stone, a friend of Administrator Pruitt and regent to the University of Oklahoma, simply connected Pruitt to the athletic department. Pruitt purchased the tickets at face value from the OU athletic department. To report otherwise is false," Wilcox said.

The New York Times [reported](#) today that Pruitt's tickets to the Rose Bowl cost \$175 each from a special allotment for the University of Oklahoma. The tickets — four of them, near the 50-yard line — were bought five days before the sold-out game on New Year's Day.

The newspaper also said that Pruitt had asked aides to perform several personal tasks for him, including helping his daughter secure a White House internship. E&E News reported in April that EPA Chief of Staff Ryan Jackson assisted with that particular assignment ([Greenwire](#), April 11).

Pruitt has been swamped in recent months with various ethics allegations regarding his pricey travel, expansive security and rent of a Capitol Hill condo linked to a lobbyist part of last year, among other issues. The EPA chief has set up a legal defense fund as he faces multiple investigations into his tenure at the agency. In his letter, Cummings asked that Stone provide several batches of records, including any communications between him and Pruitt. Cummings gave a deadline of June 28 for Stone's response.

In a separate [tweet](#) today, Stone said, "I'll respond to Rep. Cummings."

He also said on [social media](#) that his firm doesn't lobby EPA.

"In our case with API and every other client Saxum works with, lobbying EPA isn't the type of work we do," Stone said.

Meanwhile, the Oversight and Government Reform Committee's investigation into EPA under Pruitt's watch continues to roll on.

A Republican committee aide told E&E News that panel staff will interview Jackson as well as Samantha Dravis, Pruitt's former policy chief, at the end of this month.

The committee is also seeking an interview with Kevin Chmielewski, the former EPA deputy chief of staff for operations and Trump appointee who clashed with Pruitt. The panel has yet to hear back from Chmielewski, according to the aide ([Greenwire](#), June 14).

WHITE HOUSE

Trump 'not happy' with Pruitt controversies

[Hannah Northey](#), E&E News reporter



Published: Friday, June 15, 2018

President Trump made a surprise appearance before reporters this morning on the White House lawn. C-SPAN

President Trump told reporters today that he's not pleased with a string of controversies surrounding his EPA chief, but signaled Scott Pruitt's performance remains solid.

"I'm not happy about certain things, but he's done a fantastic job running the EPA, which is very overriding," Trump said from the White House driveway.

When asked whether Pruitt was using his office for personal gain, Trump replied, "I hope not."

While Pruitt has faced a barrage of negative stories and findings about questionable use of staff and overspending for months — as well as a string of ongoing investigations — it's not clear when or whether the EPA boss will step down.

A growing number of conservatives in recent days, including radio host Laura Ingraham, whom Trump follows on Twitter, have said Pruitt's "gotta go" ([E&E Daily](#), June 14).

But Republicans and Democrats on the Hill yesterday questioned the effectiveness of publicly speaking out against the EPA administrator.

Democratic Sen. Sherrod Brown of Ohio during an interview yesterday said Republicans won't speak up against Pruitt without taking a cue from Trump.

"Republicans aren't going to speak out much because they never speak out against the president unless they are leaving," he said. "I don't know that we have any impact [on Pruitt], we have a lot of other things to fight. I strongly believe Pruitt should resign, but I don't put a lot of time into it, there are more important things to do."

Republican House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) said at his weekly Capitol news conference that he wasn't even watching what's become a steady stream of stories surrounding the agency and Pruitt's management.

"Frankly, I haven't paid that close attention to it. I would refer you to the authorizing committee that oversees the EPA," Ryan said in response to a question from E&E News. "I'm glad, with kind of a regulatory position they've taken, but I can't — I don't know enough about what Pruitt has or has not done to give you a good comment."

Reporter George Cahlink contributed.

OFF TOPIC

This Republican senator is fed up with Scott Pruitt

Hannah Northey, E&E News reporter Published: Friday, June 15, 2018



Republican Sen. Joni Ernst of Iowa isn't happy with EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt. Gage Skidmore/Flickr

Sen. Joni Ernst goes bold. She'll sport camouflage high heels, spin yarns about castrating hogs and bluntly criticize embattled EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt. During a short interview from her Capitol Hill office yesterday, the 47-year-old Iowa Republican — a mother of three and military veteran — blasted Pruitt for undermining President Trump's agenda and the renewable fuel standard, a political third rail in the Hawkeye State. But Ernst also stopped short of calling for the EPA chief's resignation.

E&E SERIES

OFF TOPIC

Energy and environmental newsmakers dish on politics, pet peeves and their TV addictions. [Click here](#) to read more stories in this series.

"Would I like to see him gone? Yes, I would," she said. "But that is up to the president to make that decision. I think the president's tolerance is wearing thin."

A member of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee and Environment and Public Works Committee, Ernst is pushing with other Corn Belt lawmakers to expand the sale of gasoline blended with 15 percent ethanol under the RFS. She has derided Pruitt "as swampy as you get" and criticized him for handing RFS waivers to oil and gas refiners that maintain the standard's requirements are a financial hardship. EPA has said it's required by law to offer those waivers.

Ernst is the daughter of Montgomery County, Iowa, hog farmers. She and her brother and sister grew up sharing responsibilities for managing livestock before she went off to college. She served in the military for more than two decades, eventually earning the rank of lieutenant colonel and serving as a commanding officer in the Iowa Army National Guard.

Her upbringing on the farm and military career are central to Ernst's political career, which began with a three-year stint as an Iowa state senator before her 2014 election to the Senate to replace retiring Democratic Sen. Tom Harkin.

In a political ad that propelled her 2014 Senate bid, Ernst brazenly touted her farm experience: "I grew up castrating hogs on a Iowa farm, so when I get to Washington, I'll know how to cut pork."

And when she gave the Republican rebuttal to President Obama's State of the Union speech in 2015, she did so in camouflage heels.

Ernst sat down with E&E News yesterday to talk about Pruitt, her famous footwear and life as a farm kid.

I see you're not wearing your signature camouflage heels.

No! OK, so I sold my camouflage heels at an auction. I was raising money for the global war on terrorism national monument that will be erected down on the National Mall. I had legislation that helped them establish the foundation. That's a memorial for my era of global war on terror veterans.

We auctioned off the shoes; they brought \$1,000. I was happy to part with them because it will be so meaningful.

This week, you said Pruitt wasn't serving Trump's agenda. How so?

No. 1, the president made a commitment during his campaign to work hard for American farmers and to uphold the renewable fuel standard, and I feel that EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt has been very deceptive and is undermining the president's promise to American farmers and ranchers.

In that aspect, he's not serving the president well.

Then you look at some of the other issues going on within his own personal office, with some of the allegations that have been made against him regarding how he uses his personal staff and so forth.

That's not acceptable to American taxpayers, and if it's not acceptable to our constituents, it should not be acceptable to the president.

Do you think he should resign?

Well, I'm not going to call for that, necessarily. Sure, would I like to see him gone? Yes, I would. But that is up to the president to make that decision. I think the president's tolerance is wearing thin.

What about Pruitt's handling of the RFS waivers?

He has basically, like I said, undermined the RFS. I have said it before, I believe he lied to me when he put in writing the fact that he was going to uphold the spirit and the letter of the law when it came to the RFS. He's said he would move away from the export [Renewable Identification Numbers] scheme, and that's what he's promoting now.

I think in so many ways, he's just gone the wrong direction.

Will legislation be needed after 2022 to protect the RFS?

I think we will have to work through something, yes, I do. What that looks like, I can't tell you today. I am hopeful that we will continue to be very successful in the renewable space, and how that success goes depends on what type of legislation we might see going forward. We have a lot of oil industry states that are not very friendly to renewables.

Tell me about your childhood in Iowa.

We had a hog farm. As a young girl, I did all the hog chores with my dad and my older sister, and then along came my brother, and he helped, as well. We had soybeans and corn, too, and I have to say it was hard work, but it was the best childhood ever.

I wish that was the same type of childhood my daughter had, but she was raised in town, so she would go out and ride in the combine with Uncle Joe or Aunt Julie, but she didn't have that firsthand experience of raising livestock or doing anything like that.

Did you really castrate hogs?

Yes, we did. It was a big day anytime we did that. It was my mom, my dad, and my sister and my brother. He's five, six years younger than us, so he'd just have the iodine bottle. My sister and I would cut or hold depending on whose turn it was. My little brother would go along with an iodine bottle and just spray behind us so those little piggies would heal up well.

It was a small farm, so it's not like we did this every day, but it was those life lessons that I wish a lot of other kids would experience: the hard work and that it's OK to get your hands dirty, and being so close to our food sources and understanding how it works.

When do you get back home?

I go back to Iowa often. When we have an opportunity, my husband and I each have a motorcycle, and we'll go for a motorcycle ride. Just being with family is important.

Last weekend, we just sat around a bonfire and did s'mores, and it was a hoot. My daughter's back from college, so that's kind of what we do.

That's got to be a good break from D.C.

It's the greatest break in the world.

This interview has been edited and condensed.

WILDLIFE

Fungus behind bat-killing disease found in S.D.

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The fungus that causes white-nose syndrome has been found for the first time in South Dakota, according to the National Park Service.

The deadly disease, first found in New York, has devastated bat populations and killed 100 percent of bats in some colonies.

The fungus *Pseudogymnoascus destructans* was found on five bats at Badlands National Park in May. That included the first known time the fungus was found on a western small-footed bat. The syndrome itself has not been confirmed in the state.

Through pest control and pollination, bats contribute at least \$3 billion each year to U.S. agriculture.

White-nose syndrome has been found in 32 states and seven Canadian provinces ([Rapid City Journal](#), June 11). — NB

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